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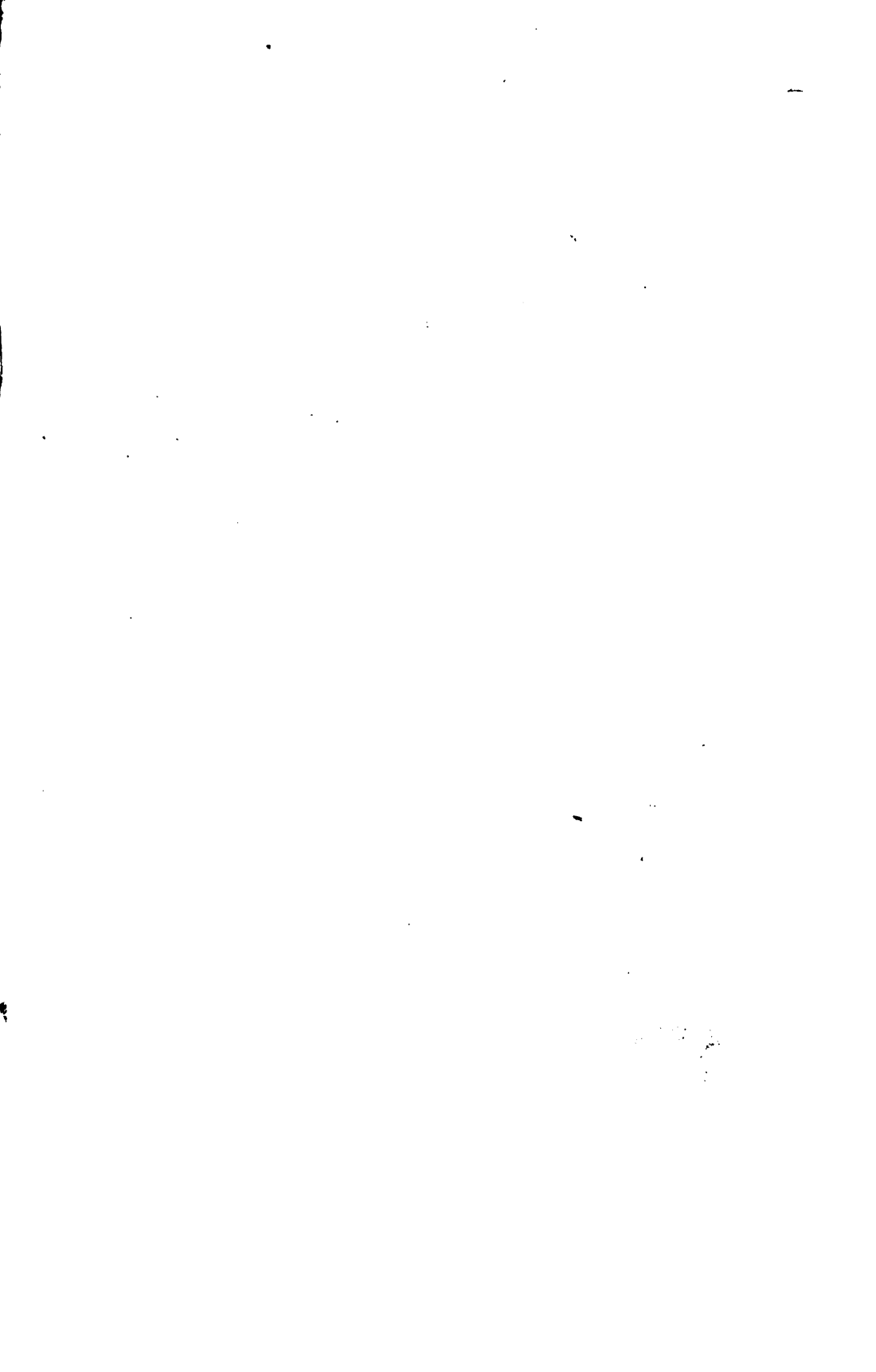
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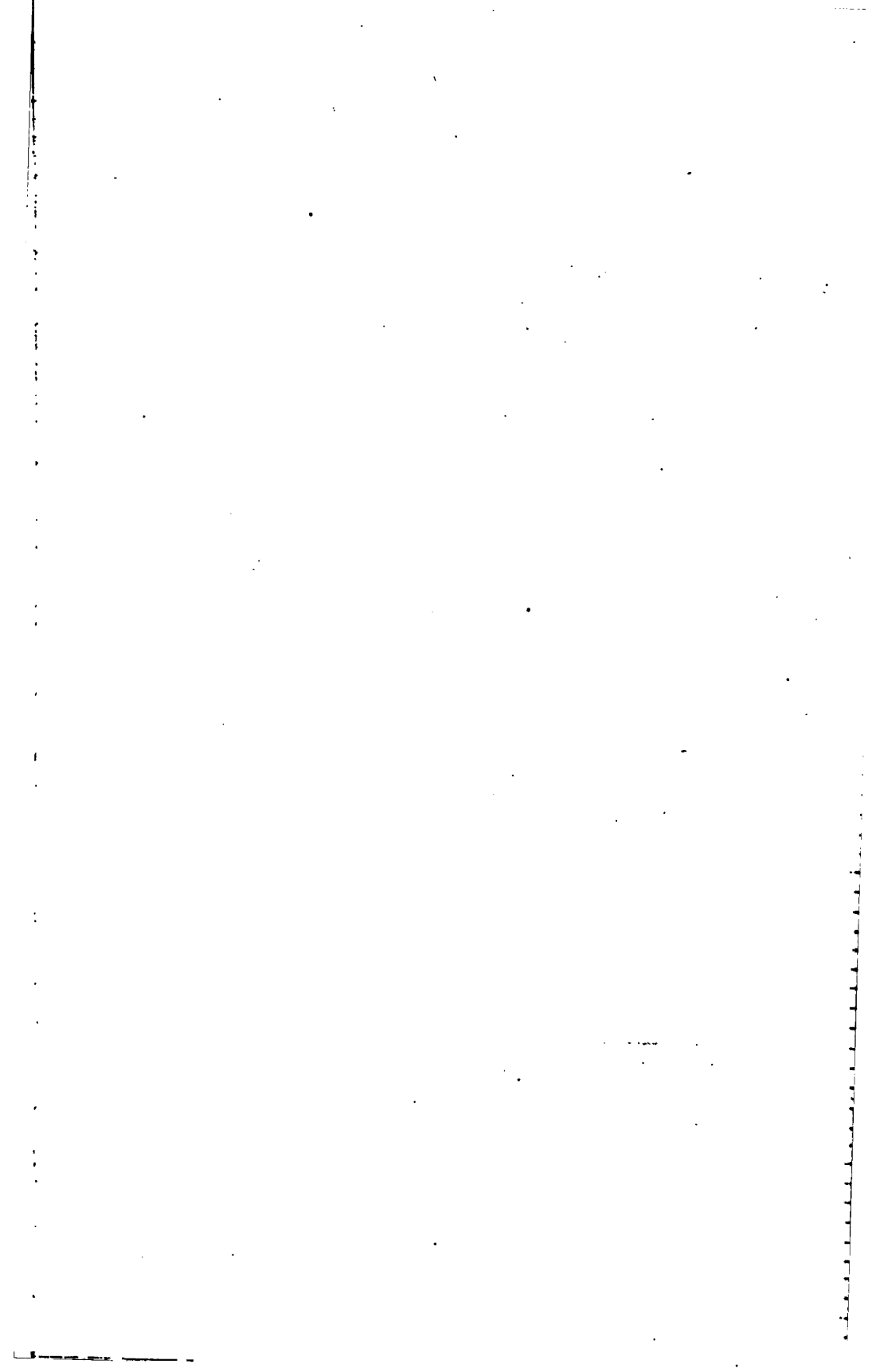
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° 1. See Opposite.

° 2. Martin, B. N. *The Classics in Education: an Essay, etc.* Aug. 6th, 1867. Albany. 1867.

U
Classical Studies as Part of Academic Education.

AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT ANDOVER, FEB. 7, 1866,

BEFORE THE

ALUMNI OF PHILLIPS ACADEMY,

AT THE

DEDICATION OF THE NEW ACADEMIC HALL.

BY

PHILIP H. SEARS.

BOSTON:

PRESS OF ALFRED MUDGE & SON.

1866.

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1866. May 22

Copy of

the letter

to Boston

A D D R E S S .

*Mr. President, Honored Trustees and Instructors, and Fellow Alumni
of Phillips Academy:—*

To this hallowed hill of learning, sacred to the muses of classic lore, sacred also to the Heavenly Muse of Sion hill "and Siloa's brook that flowed fast by the oracle of God," have come up here to-day, at the welcome call, the sons of this venerated academic mother, to dedicate to its noble ends this new temple of letters, which our hands have helped to build, and whose glory, we trust, shall be even greater than the glory of the former house. From the divergent ways and walks of life, from students' rooms and professors' chairs in collegiate halls, from the desk and chancel of Christian ministrations, from the market-place and the exchange "where merchants most do congregate," from the public halls of legislation, from the arena of forensic warfare, and from "tented fields" lately echoing with the voice of mortal battle, this venerable institution,—*magna parens virum*,—sees her children come up here to-day to lay their offerings upon this altar of their youthful affection, to join here the hands of brothers in formal union, to kindle afresh in the heart at this Olympic source the generous Promethean flame of former days, and to assist, so far as may be, in handing down to after times, undimmed, the sacred torch of *Liberal Culture*. With sentiments of profound reverence for the noble men, who, at the birth of the nation, established this seat of the highest disciplines for individual and national welfare; with feelings of gratitude towards the successive guardians

who, with so much faithfulness and efficiency, from the first up to this hour, have watched over, preserved and administered this great inheritance of the present and coming generations; with still warmer feelings of affectionate regard for the honored instructors who, with such ability and devotedness, have here awakened the dormant faculties to the charms of learning, we return now to this spot of our academic nurture to participate in the duties and enjoyments of this day. After four academic buildings have been successively set apart on this hill to the functions of this institution, each superior to its predecessor in dimension, architectural design, and adaptation to its ends, we dedicate to-day this fifth academic hall, far surpassing them all. After more than seven thousand students have come under the moulding influence of the education here given, and have gone forth to exhibit its power in the world during their day and generation, we organize here to-day a Society of Alumni that shall be the heir of their fame, and a guardian henceforth of their honor and of their Alma Mater's. After this institution has been blessing the country during the whole existence of each, from the midst of the great struggle of independence down to the triumphant close of the still greater struggle which has so gloriously vindicated the nation's life and principles, and opened to it a new era of greatness if rightly improved, — at this epoch of the nation we meet together to celebrate a new epoch in the history of Phillips Academy, and to give it a new God-speed upon its further course of beneficent influence.

The occasion, almost of itself, invites us to consider in rapid glance the nature of the work to which this institution was devoted by its founders, the value or importance of that work contemplated in the light and under the criticisms of our own day, the success with which it has been hitherto performed, and the existing call for such work and its adaptation to the demands and requirements of the future; to a hasty view of

these topics, therefore, I ask, for a few moments, your indulgent attention.

In the year 1778, in the midst of our revolutionary conflict, when the resolution to maintain the Declaration of Independence had become an unalterable purpose, the brothers Samuel Phillips, of Andover, and John Phillips, of Exeter — *par nobile fratrum* — under the moving influence of the illustrious son of the former, Samuel Phillips, Jr., of Andover, for “the safety and happiness of the people,” for “the good of mankind” and the service of “our Heavenly Benefactor,” founded this institution, the first incorporated academy in New England. They established it for a two-fold purpose, having for its secondary object the preparation of young men for the business of teaching, and for those active pursuits of life which require the practical application of the mathematical and physical sciences, together with a superior knowledge of the English tongue, but having for its primary and great end the due preparation for a university course, and the *proper commencement and foundation* of that integral, symmetrical and complete culture which involves the harmonious development of all the higher faculties and capacities in their true order and proportion, and which, in the words of Milton, “fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war.”

The importance and necessity of the secondary object and function of the institution they fully appreciated and insisted on, as their trustees have done ever since; but, in order that there might not be wanting to our rising nation those great supports and ornaments, the enlightened divine, jurist, statesman, scholar and man of letters and true scientific philosopher, they aimed principally to provide here the *solid foundation* for a truly *liberal* culture, planting the chief corner-stone thereof deep in the study of the classics. For the best discipline and cultivation of the highest powers of the human intellect, the

reason, memory, imagination and taste; for the best preparation for the learned professions as well as for the duties of the republican citizen and patriot, and the Christian scholar; and, in the words of the founders, for furnishing the students "with such general maxims of conduct as may best enable them to pass through all the several connections and various scenes incident to human life, with ease, reputation, and comfort," — they believed there was nothing so effective as thorough training in classical studies; and accordingly the successive trustees and instructors of this academy have faithfully carried into effect the original design and plan of education, devoting the *first* department to classical training, and the second department to the study of mathematical and physical science and the English language and literature.

The expediency and utility of such scientific and English course as is here pursued, so extensive, complete and efficient, and the importance of its influence in the community, have never been called in question; on the contrary, the peculiar tendencies of our people and times secure to it from all, unqualified appreciation and commendation. But, from time to time, and especially in very recent times, under the influence of the answers made to the parliamentary commission upon the great schools of England by the scientific men of that country, the propriety of studying the classic languages, and particularly the Greek language, as part of an academic or collegiate education, has been made the subject of attacks the most elaborate and most widely spread abroad through popular channels, addressing the peculiar predispositions of our people, and calling perhaps for some defence of classical study on an occasion like this; especially when, by the testimony of the same scientific men, by reasoning that never has been nor can be answered, and by the actual results of the career of this academy, the classical course here pursued may be not only perfectly vindicated, but commended to still higher and wider approval.

The favorite objections now so much in vogue against classical study as part of a liberal education, which most require our notice, may be stated in few words, and be answered, I believe, almost as briefly.

It is urged in these objections, First, that many desirous of obtaining superior education have no aptitude for classical studies, and therefore a different kind of study and discipline ought to be provided for them. Secondly, that the observing powers of the mind are developed in the order of nature at an earlier age than the powers of reflection and reasoning; that certain branches of natural science are better fitted to train the powers of observation than the study of the classics, and therefore classical study ought to be removed from the course of all early academic education. Thirdly, that classical study is superfluous as a means of intellectual discipline, being inferior for that purpose to the study of the physical sciences and modern languages, which alone are accounted of actual use in life, and therefore these latter studies ought to supersede and replace the classics; and, Fourthly, that the great progress of science and increase of knowledge within the last half century, together with the impatience felt in this country to enter early into the active pursuits of life, make any general scholarship or general culture altogether impracticable, necessitate a minute subdivision of intellectual labor, and require that all preliminary general education should be reduced to a minimum, and be superseded in great measure by special professional training.

These several objections, I need not say in this presence, are founded mainly upon mistakes of fact or of reasoning so evident to those familiar with the subject, as to obviate the necessity of making any elaborate reply.

That those who have no aptitude for classical study, but have capacities alone adapted to the physical and practical sciences or modern utilitarian studies, should nevertheless be obliged to

pursue a classical course, no advocate of classical studies in this country, and least of all any acting under the constitution of this academy, ever claims; the English department of this institution, the technological institutes, the scientific schools connected with our colleges, are peculiarly fitted for such. Let them enter there, and pursue the studies and adopt the vocations best suited to them.

Again, that the power of accurate external observation has commonly an earlier development than the powers of reflection, and that the early study of the elements of natural history will best train the mind in exact habits and methods of *outward* observation and classification, may be readily granted; but what the friends of classical study claim is, that the reflective and reasoning powers, when in the order of nature their active development does begin, equally require *their proper nourishment*, exercise and discipline, and that thorough classical study is this proper and best nourishment and discipline.

According to the testimony given to the parliamentary commission by the scientific men, and especially by Sir Charles Lyell, Faraday, Owen, Carpenter and Hooker, the development of the powers of accurate observation and classification begins as early as the age of eight or nine years, and all the necessary gymnastic training of these powers may be completed by the age of twelve or fourteen years. According to the testimony of the same scientific men as well as upon common observation, the active, marked development of the reflective and reasoning powers begins ordinarily between the ages of thirteen and fifteen years, and their discipline ought then to commence, and to be continued through the course of academic and collegiate education. The statistics of this academy, on examination, show that the average age of entering the *classical* department through the whole period, from the first to the present time, does not differ much from fourteen years, the average age of entering during recent years being still greater, and only very few in recent

years entering earlier than the age of thirteen; leaving ample time for the previous study of the common branches of English education, including elementary botany and zoölogy, at the public schools established under the laws of the Commonwealth. The classical course of this academy begins, therefore, with the active normal development of the reflective and reasoning powers, and this classical course, with a suitable collateral course of mathematics to be duly continued in college, it is hardly too much to say, is the best conceivable discipline for the three years through which the course extends.

For the cultivation of the power and habit of internal, reflex observation of the mind's own processes of thought, feeling, and expression,—for the cultivation of the powers and habits of sustained, continuous attention, of persistent application, of nice discrimination, of searching and exact analysis, of moral or probable reasoning and consecutive reflection, of clear perception in attaining distinct ideas with the ability of precise expression, of well-trained judgment in weighing and comparing conflicting considerations, of abstraction, memory, shaping imagination, critical and refined taste, what discipline can be found or imagined, to be compared with thorough study of the classic languages and literature?

The study of language is at once an objective and a subjective study, and through its subjective part it is the best introduction of all to the genuine study of the philosophy of mind, the best introduction to that real knowledge of the mind and heart of man which is so essential in the professions of divinity and law, in the questions of history and of politics, in the arts of design, in all the active dealings of life, and is not less important as necessary preparation for the true philosophical study of nature. Call to mind for a moment in a summary and simple form the actual process of studying the languages. After learning the rules of grammar with appropriate illustrations, in attempting to render from the unknown tongue into the vernacular, the

student has in the open volume before him simply a series of printed words, printed characters, that are in themselves mere arbitrary or phonetic signs; by means of the vocabulary and grammar he has suggested to him, in vernacular terms, the various *possible* ideas, relations, objects, or conceptions of objects which these words, phrases, and forms of construction *may* be used to represent; but before he can determine what particular thoughts or conceptions *are actually intended* to be there expressed, he is obliged to turn his attention inward upon his own consciousness, and call up there these various conceptions, and scan them carefully, and compare them exactly with the ascertained meanings in the sentence before him, if any there be, with the known values, to speak in mathematical phrase, or else with the several possible values within the determinate limits, until by much comparison and going backward and forward, to and fro, he is able at length to settle to his own satisfaction the true meaning of the whole sentence and of each of its parts. On the other hand, too, in undertaking to compose in the classic language or to translate into it, inasmuch as he cannot think in that language, and as scarcely any individual word of the vernacular tongue is precisely equivalent in meaning to any individual word of the classic tongue, he will be still more obliged to disrobe his thoughts of their vernacular garb, and look in upon them *face to face*, and ascertain definitely their real purport and extent, their quality and quantity, before he can express them precisely in classic phraseology. No one can reflect for a moment upon this simple, ordinary process of studying the languages without seeing at once how it contributes to the formation of some of the highest and most important intellectual habits. It takes the youth at an age when during his whole previous life his attention has been given to outward observation, and when the direct study of what Milton calls the "intellective abstractions of logic and metaphysics" would be altogether impossible, and turns the attention

inward, and by *an indirect method* forms the habit of internal observation, and lays the foundation for the subsequent direct study of mental philosophy. And indeed, unless the power of internal observation be thus developed by the early study of languages, the study of mental philosophy itself at any period of life will too often become merely learning the speculations and conclusions of others, without any testing of them by direct inspection and study of actual consciousness.

The same process, it is equally evident, must produce by its direct effect habitual clearness and precision both of thought and expression, which Locke makes to be the most important work of education. It involves, too, necessarily close application and steady attention. It constantly exercises the understanding in analyzing, discriminating, comparing, in weighing and judging of probabilities of meaning, and thence forming conclusions; in short, in all the operations of practical logic; and when the student has to prepare himself also to answer the manifold questions that may be put to him in the manner illustrated so admirably in that invaluable work, "The Method of Classical Study," in respect to the composition, derivation and affiliation of words, the peculiarities of idiom, the exact force of particles, phrases, and forms of construction, the arrangement and syntax of the whole, the comparison of the classic languages with each other and with the English as the basis for understanding universal grammar and the philosophy of language, together with all questions of ethnography, mythology, geography, history, biography, antiquities, and of the logic, the rhetoric, the style and art of composition of the author, what various resources as well as powers are not of necessity called into requisition?

But how much all these various mental exercises and efforts are enlarged and intensified when the student in due course comes to the more difficult portions of classic study, to those condensed, elliptical speeches in Thucydides, or to those long,

complicated passages of Livy, wherein the author, taking advantage of the peculiar means for transposition in the arrangement and collocation of words and clauses given to the classic languages by their properties of inflection through declension, conjugation and comparison, thereby dispensing so much with the use of prepositions, adverbs, auxiliaries and pronouns, for purposes of artistic effect, involves his intricate sentences with clause enfolded within clause, with qualification upon qualification, limitation after limitation, governing words removed far from the words governed, qualifying words far from those qualified, but all the parts connected together by nicely adjusted mechanism, and the whole almost as difficult of comprehension and grasp in one general view as the most complicated pieces of modern machinery! And yet the work of comprehending and interpreting throughout is to be accomplished by the student himself, through the exertions of his own understanding, with such aid only, often absolutely necessary, as the judicious teacher or editor may think it wise to give. For let it be remembered, that, by the methods of study here pursued, the student of to-day, as truly as the student of three centuries ago, in endeavoring to make out the sense of each successive passage or sentence of the classic author, has to exercise his own faculties *originally* upon the solution of the problem of its meaning. With most valuable aid upon the abstruse points, but without aid in other parts, he has to work his way laboriously, perseveringly through the difficulties of the question; and it is this *patient, persistent, strenuous intellectual exertion* that most effectively develops into active energy all the native powers of the understanding.

The physical sciences, evidently, cannot supply this place of classical studies as mental discipline. After the early study of botany and zoölogy for forming habits of observation and classification, the physical sciences for the most part are communicated to the student as general results already attained,

illustrated by simple experiments, and requiring very little intellectual effort for their comprehension, or else they belong to a much later stage of education, after an advanced course of mathematics, like the mathematical parts of astronomy, optics, or electro-magnetism. *They are not studied as original investigations of the student himself.* In the language of Sir William Hamilton, "Merely to learn what has been already detected and detailed, calls out in the student the very feeblest effort of thought. Consequently, these (physical) studies tend the least to develop the understanding, and even leave it, for aught that they thus effect, in a state of comparative weakness and barbarism." (Discussions, p. 705.) Not even the scientific men of England have ventured to claim for these studies any disciplinary influence to be compared with the classics. But yet that the physical sciences should be studied at *some time* before the close of the university course, for acquiring knowledge of their principles and of the important truths embraced in their general results, the friends of classical study are ever among the foremost in maintaining. Nor need the great progress of science and increase of knowledge within the last half century deter any student from acquiring a mastery of the general principles and results of these sciences. Their details belong only to the special cultivator of each science, and are of but little value to any one else. This very progress within the last half century has reduced these sciences to a more systematic form, and, instead of making the acquisition of their general principles and results more difficult, has rendered it far easier than ever before, as has been shown so clearly by Humboldt in his "Cosmos." To quote a few words of his language, "The exposition of general results has been singularly facilitated by the happy revolution experienced since the close of the last century, in the condition of all the special sciences, more particularly of geology, chemistry, and descriptive natural history. In proportion as laws admit of more general application, and

as sciences mutually enrich each other, and by their extension become connected together in more numerous and more intimate relations, the development of general truths may be given with conciseness devoid of *superficiality*." (Cosmos, tr. by Otté, p. 29. See, also, p. 27.)

Neither, again, can the *English*, or any other *modern language*, take the place of the classic languages as the groundwork of intellectual training. Apart from manifold other defects, their relative lack of inflection and consequent use of particles, while denying to them the artistic capabilities of the ancient languages, at the same time impose upon them a comparatively fixed order in the collocation of words and clauses with little possibility of transposition or variation; and this peculiarity alone would deprive them of a great part of the disciplinary power of the Greek and Latin tongues. In comparison with those tongues, the modern languages can hardly be said to have *any* grammar, except that inevitable grammar to which the logical laws of human thought subject them. Neither could any text-books be found or prepared to compare with the great classic text-books whose critical annotations are the work of ages. From the time that Plato and Aristotle discussed grammar as a part of logic, — from the time that Zenodotus developed its principles as an instrument for the criticism of the text of Homer, and Dionysius Thrax formulized them in Latin for the instruction of Roman youth, down to the latest grammatical or critical work of the German scholar of to-day, the classic languages and authors have been the perpetual subjects of critical study and commentary by the most acute and cultivated minds of twenty centuries. The classics are studied in an atmosphere of light. In comparison, no modern language or author can claim to have any critical exposition or commentary. These living languages rather are and will be studied chiefly for actual use in social and business intercourse, or in reading their literary and scientific works for the sake of the subject-

matter, and these objects lead to entirely different methods of study, involving but little disciplinary influence.

Let it be added, too, that neither the English nor any modern language of Southern Europe can be mastered or truly understood as an instrument of literary composition without a knowledge of the classic tongues. The French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and modern Greek are, it is well known, scarcely more than mere corruptions of the ancient tongues, and are half learned in learning the latter; and the English itself, though Teutonic in its grammar, is mainly classic in its vocabulary; for more than two thirds of the English words in use, it is settled by actual count, are from classic sources, while much less than one third is of Teutonic origin. The derivation, lineage, kinship and associations, the nice shades of meaning of all these words, must be sought from the original sources. The great modern authors have constantly used them in view of their original history, and these authors cannot be properly appreciated, so far as their *words only* are concerned, without the same classical knowledge.

But, what is far more important, the moulding taste, the ideals, the essential soul of modern literature, are vitally classic. The plastic spirit of Greece is the bond of affinity and sympathy running through all the works of modern genius, uniting them in a common republic of letters, and requiring for their appreciation a participation in the same spirit. In the words of Macaulay, From "that splendid literature of Greece have sprung all the strength, the wisdom, the freedom and the glory of the Western world." . . . "What shall we say when we reflect that from hence have sprung directly or indirectly all the noblest creations of the human intellect; that from hence were the vast accomplishments and the brilliant fancy of Cicero, the withering fire of Juvenal, the plastic imagination of Dante, the humor of Cervantes, the comprehension of Bacon, the wit of Butler, the supreme and universal excellence of

Shakespeare? All the triumphs of truth and genius over prejudice and power, in every country and in every age, have been the triumphs of Athens." Who, then, without imbibing the same spirit from the same original fountains, shall dream of entering into the inner genius of modern literature, of appreciating its highest artistic beauties, of enjoying its greatest charms, or of being able to make any genuine contributions to it? To cut off American mind from access to this primal source of inspiration, would be to insure a lapse into intellectual barbarism. To no literary man so much as to the American, is classical study essential. Well has it been said by De Tocqueville, "No literature places those fine qualities in which the writers of democracies are naturally deficient, in bolder relief than that of the ancients; no literature, therefore, ought to be more studied in democratic times."

Nor can translations avail anything for this purpose. The essential spirit and ethereal beauty of the original, as every classical scholar knows, vanish entirely in the version. Notwithstanding the countless translations of the Iliad, ending with the Earl of Derby's or Sir John Herschel's, the "wingèd words" of the "old man eloquent" have never been reproduced in English, but Homer still sits wrapped in his own mantle, unapproachable, like his own Olympus.

Still more practically essential is classical study to the divine, the jurist, the scientific philosopher, and the statesman. Protestant theology has been defined by Sir William Hamilton to be substantially "applied philology and criticism." Even though this be not the whole of Christian theology, certainly no man can be thought competent to instruct others in Christian truth who is himself unable to interpret the original writings in which alone the Christian oracles have been transmitted to us. The ordinary text-books, too, of the lawyer, are bristling over with Latin, and the earliest precedents of his profession are in the Latinized French of the Normans, neither of which

can be understood without a familiar knowledge of the Latin language. Classical study is also the best, if not absolutely indispensable, preparation for that part of his professional duty which involves the interpretation of constitutions, statutes, ordinances, wills, contracts, and writings of every description. And if the lawyer aspire to that systematic knowledge of principles which constitutes the science of jurisprudence, he must of necessity resort constantly to those great works of the civil law, those peerless monuments of juridical wisdom, which the Roman tongue contains.

For the right study and interpretation of nature, also, there is no better preparation than early classical training. The physical world, it must not be forgotten, is only a part, only one hemisphere, of the creation of God, and it cannot be understood or interpreted aright, without the light reflected upon it from the counterpart and correspondent hemisphere, which is the mind and soul of man. The physical inquirer, whose training has been wholly in physical pursuits, will find in nature nothing but the operation of mechanical and chemical forces; but the physical student, whose early attention through the study of the languages has been turned back upon the inner consciousness, and who has observed there the essential characteristics of *free* causality and rational design, will, like the great masters of antiquity, see nature everywhere pervaded and irradiated by the presence of upholding spiritual power, and will learn

"To look through Nature up to Nature's God."

For the republican statesman what school can be found like the history of the Grecian and Roman republics? What mistakes in that great contest which has just closed might not have been avoided through a more thoughtful study of classic history? With the facts of that history vividly or clearly in mind, who could disbelieve the possibility or the likelihood of civil conflicts in a federate or a consolidated republic? Who

delay to gird up all the strength of the nation in the outset for a contest of "Greek meeting Greek"? Our most distinguished Massachusetts statesmen of classical scholarship — Everett, Quincy, Webster, Choate — foresaw the approaching conflict, and had they all survived in their vigor, they would all undoubtedly in 1861 as in 1831 have brought to the support of the government and flag of their country the united resources of their great statesmanship and eloquence. The same classic history equally supplies an inexhaustible storehouse of political instruction for the future emergencies of the nation and the State. Let us congratulate the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that she has at the head of her affairs a statesman of classic culture, who has learned from the same sources with the Athenian statesman the arts by which small States are made great ones.

Of what still higher value is the early study of classical history to the character of the American citizen! Who can estimate the influence of those glorious historic examples of Roman loyalty, fidelity and devotion, of Grecian heroism and patriotic daring, upon the educated mind of our people? What youthful heart was ever so cold as to follow the transporting pages of Herodotus at the Pass of Thermopylæ, on the plain of Marathon, in the Bay of Salamis, without being set on fire with the flame of heroic patriotism? The heroic spirit of the classic records, more exciting even than the crackling of the laurels of Miltiades, has ever imbued profoundly the heart of our educated youth. When the country called to arms, how to the surprise and delight of the whole land did the students and alumni of our colleges and academies, beyond any other class, rush into the field! and wherever, throughout the bloody scenes of that great conflict, — at Cedar Mountain, Fredericksburg, the Wilderness, Petersburg, — heroes were wanted to march, like the Light Brigade of Crimean fame,

"Into the jaws of death,
Into the mouth of hell,"

they were the men for the service, and rivers of blood have borne witness to the loftiness of their patriotic devotion. More than six hundred of those who had studied in this institution, bearing forth the Spartan motto, "Return with your shield or upon it," followed the flag of their country in its hour of need, and gloriously illustrated the lessons here taught them. It is our peculiar happiness to welcome so many of them here to-day. They have reflected the highest lustre upon this institution, and gladly would we deck them with crowns of laurel and place them on seats of honor. But how many of those who went forth return to us no more! "They went because they were called." Faithful to the instructions here impressed on their hearts, they stood unmoved at the post of duty, in the face of danger and death; and they now enjoin the stranger on the fields of Antietam, Gettysburg, the Wilderness, like the Spartans at Thermopylæ, to tell it here at Lacedæmon that they lie there *in obedience* to her commands, —

"More sacred than in life, and lovelier far
For having perished in the front of war."

What encouragement to the future work, what testimony to the past success of this institution, is given by these heroic lives and deaths of its sons! That success in the past has been most signal, advancing steadily from the feeblest beginnings onward to the present greatness, and marking its course throughout with a trail of light.

Eighty-seven years ago this academy began its functions near yonder corner in a small structure of wood, of one story and a single school-room; after occupying successively larger buildings of wood, brick and stone, it opens to-day to its members and sons this spacious edifice of imposing proportions.

It began with only thirteen pupils, soon increased to thirty; then from time to time augmented to sixty, one hundred, two hundred, until now its annual number is between three and four hundred.

It began with an English course, embracing merely the rudiments, and a classical course of which the "Gospels" alone constituted the whole Greek part, with means and methods of study scarcely superior to its extent. Now, the English course rivals in extent and surpasses in thoroughness and practical utility the English curriculum of our best universities, and the classical course, under the influence of the distinguished scholar now at the head of the institution, while largely increased in amount, has in thoroughness attained such perfection as even the great schools of Germany can scarcely equal, —

"Pan etiam Arcadiâ dicat se iudice victum."

But its greatest success is in the results of its training as exhibited in life. Those who have received the benefit of its instructions, more than seven thousand in number, have gone forth into the various vocations requiring superior education, and have fulfilled the respective duties of their calling always with fidelity and diligence, — often with conspicuous success and distinction. They have filled the pulpits of New England, the principal seats of education, the presidential and professorial chairs of our colleges, the high places of state, the great commands of war, the dangerous and heroic posts alike of military and of missionary service; and they have nowhere been found wanting. Among their names on the roll of fame are found scholars like Marsh, Hackett, Putnam; poets like Willis and Holmes; statesmen and lawyers like Quincy, Sullivan, Phillips, Rantoul; divines like Woods, Kirkland, Ware, Buckminster, Vinton, Tyng, Clarke; and military heroes like Birney, Stevens, Bartlett.

Our Alma Mater for the future has but to follow steadily the same course as in the past, ever ready to enlarge and improve the system of education as increase of financial resources and the progress of knowledge and civilization may make it possible. In the new condition of our country, with universal freedom, and with such vast fields opening anew to enterprise

and material success, the spirit of our people, lifted into heroism through the occasions of war, will be in danger of relapsing into more engrossing and engulfing utilitarianism than before, and will need more than ever the elevating and restraining influences of humane letters and the liberal arts and sciences as well as of religion.

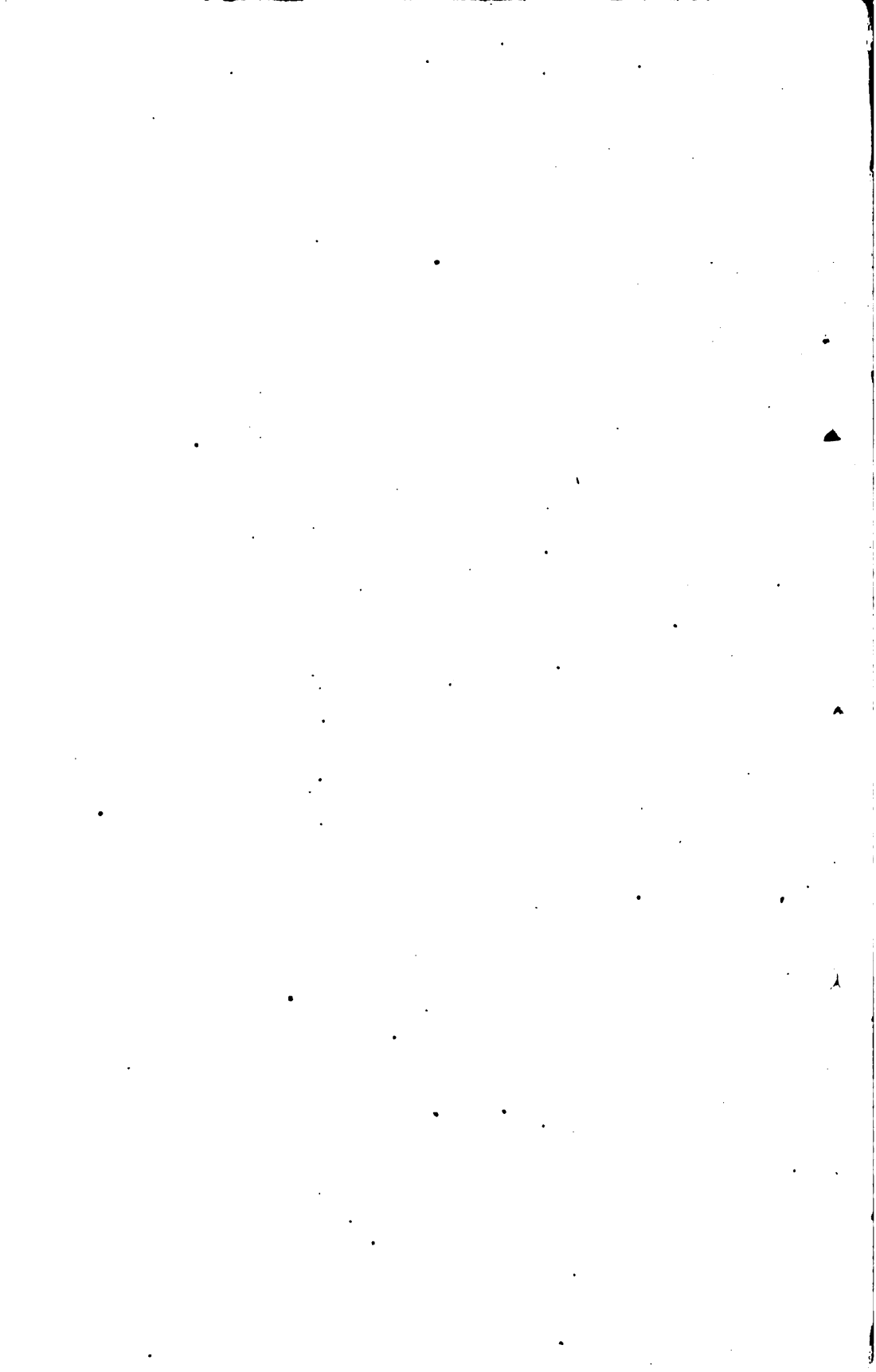
Nay, more, in the new cycle of our national existence now commencing, it behooves us by higher cultivation of both literature and science, to blot out the standing reproach of mediocrity; it behooves us through the refining influences of classic taste, to smooth down those hard angularities of manners and character which so much shock the people of older civilizations; it behooves us also, through the introduction into our schools of exercises like those of the ancient Palæstra, or by other means, to secure, if possible, to our educated men sound minds in sound bodies.

While other agencies are devoted directly to the education and elevation of the masses, it is the noble work of this and kindred institutions, for the same ultimate ends, to educate the educated, to extend the vision of the far-seeing, to raise higher the highest, and to make better the best.

To this great work,—to the same high ends to which nearly a century ago the founders devoted the institution itself,—we dedicate to-day this new building. We dedicate it to the cause of sound learning; to thorough classical scholarship, and solid, genuine proficiency in scientific and vernacular studies; to enlarged and generous culture, to lofty ideals and achievements of manly character, to high aims and attainments in virtue and religion; we dedicate it to “the safety and happiness of the people,” to “the good of mankind,” and the service of “our Heavenly Benefactor.”







Martin, B. H.
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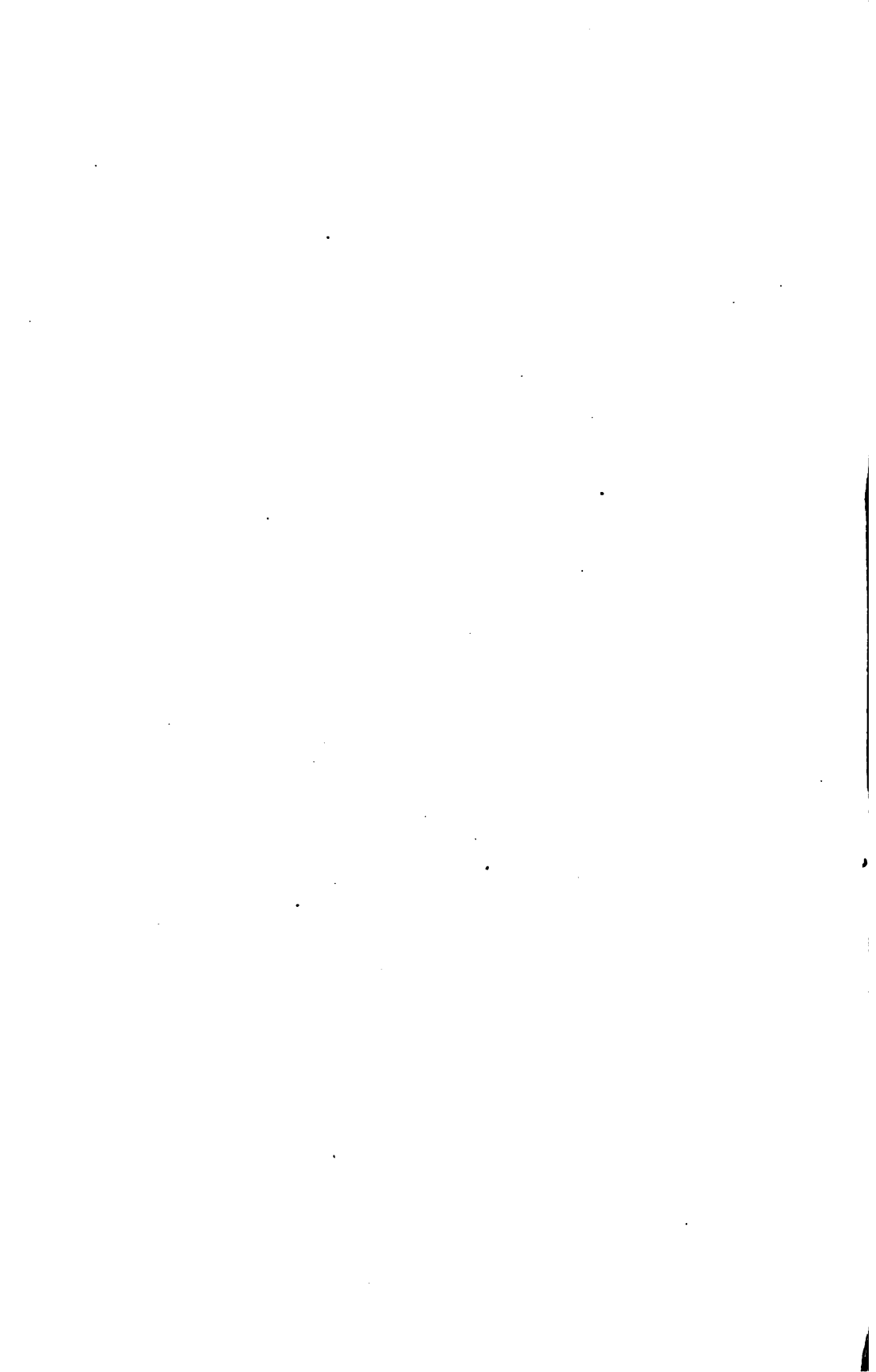
UNIVERSITY CONVOCATION
OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK.

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THE

CLASSICS IN EDUCATION:

BY BENJAMIN N. MARTIN, S. T. D.

PROFESSOR OF LOGIC, AND INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL PHILOSOPHY, IN THE UNIVERSITY
OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK.



2

The Classics in Education:

AN ESSAY

READ BEFORE THE

UNIVERSITY CONVOCATION

OF THE

STATE OF NEW YORK,

AT ITS

ANNUAL SESSION IN ALBANY,

AUGUST 6th, 1867.

By BENJAMIN N. MARTIN, S. T. D.,

PROFESSOR OF LOGIC, AND INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL PHILOSOPHY,
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THE CLASSICS IN EDUCATION.

THE study of the two great languages of the world's early civilization—so long our only means of intellectual discipline—is in our day frequently impugned as unreasonable and unjust. The world has advanced so far, we are told, in the scientific knowledge of nature, that we are no longer in the position in which we were when the Latin was the common medium of philosophical discussion, and the universal language of learned men. Why, then, waste our time in acquiring it, instead of passing over at once to the study of the great body of modern sciences?

A complete answer to this inquiry would require a more full exposition of the subject than can be given in the limits of a paper like this; but there are some considerations bearing upon this objection, for which a brief hearing may be asked.

I. In the first place, then, it may be well to inquire how far it is really true that the classical tongues have lost, in our day, their function of ages to be the vehicle of scientific truth. If the Latin is no longer the instrument of scientific research, it is, and it ever must be, in connection with its sister tongue, the Greek, the storehouse in which are deposited all the results of such research. It is at the present day, and it is continually becoming more and more, the common language of science, for the designation of all its discovered facts in natural history.

The science of nature is, I need not say, expanding rapidly on every side. The number of objects discovered has already become very great in every department of nature. The number of known plants is not much below 100,000; of insects there are supposed to be five times as many; while in every other department of nature, among the molluscs, the crustaceans, and the zoophytes, those still lower inhabitants of the deep, there are thousands of species more. The exploration of distant regions is yet going on; and every new explorer adds still many novelties to our catalogue

of bird, and beast, and fish, and insect, in nearly every quarter of the globe.

Now every one of these newly discovered objects, before its discovery can become a fact of *science*, must have a distinct name. Without a very exact method of naming, it would be impossible to impart that order and system to our knowledge which constitute science. Indeed, without a well settled system of nomenclature, this vast multitude of known objects would be but an endless and indistinguishable confusion. It is, therefore, regarded as one of the great merits of Linnæus—the renowned naturalist of Sweden, in the last century—that he gave to the world a system of the most exact and simple kind; a nomenclature capable of indefinite extension as new objects should be discovered, and applicable to each separate branch of Natural History. He aimed to designate every known natural object by a compound name, consisting of two words, generally descriptive of its characteristic features. We distinguish persons in a similar way, by a complex designation, one part of which describes the family, and the other the individual. We call a man Smith or Taylor, designating thus the family to which he belongs; and we then distinguish him from others of that family by his personal name of John or William. So Linnæus described objects of natural history, giving to each one a family, or generic, name, and adding a designation which distinguishes the species from every other of the genus. Thus, when his pupil, Kalm, brought to him a multitude of plants, from the then unexplored wilds of our own country, to describe and name, he found among them some, of a genus entirely new. To this genus, forming a word from the name of the adventurous discoverer, he gave the designation of *Kalmia*; and the beautiful species before him, which we know so well in our common laurel, with its broad and shining leaves, he named from this circumstance *broad leaved*, or in Latin, *latifolia*. *KALMIA LATIFOLIA* then, became the permanent and elegant designation of the species, preserving at once the name of the discoverer, and the most striking feature of the plant, through all future ages of scientific history.

This beautiful system, carried out into the description of all the groups, wider or less wide, which we distinguish in nature, becomes a method of classification of very high value; and gives to our knowledge an orderly arrangement, without which science were impossible.

Now it is one of the great features of this system that the names are universally expressed in the Latin and Greek languages. The name of the genus is generally taken from the latter; that of the species from the former tongue. When, for example, the remarkable investigator of the geology of Scotland, whose researches have shed such honor upon his country, Hugh Miller, presented to the British Association for the Advancement of Science, the strange organism which he had discovered in the Old Red Sandstone, and demonstrated its character as a fish, Agassiz, who was present, was requested by the Association to give a name to the unknown and extraordinary creature. Observing its two fins, projecting at right angles from its body, like the pinions of a bird, the philosopher named it at once from that characteristic circumstance; but the name could have had no scientific value if it had been expressed only in English. In that language it would have been unintelligible to nine-tenths of the scientific world. Hence Agassiz named his newly-found wonder in Greek, the common language of science for such purposes, the world over. From the two Greek words, *πτερον*, a wing, and *ιχθυς*, a fish, he formed the name PTERICHTHYS, the wing-fish; and by this name the group is henceforth known in every land, and by every naturalist, throughout the world.

The two thousand species of fish which the same great observer has recently brought from the Amazon river, will in due time be made in like manner accessible to naturalists. Each will have its double name, describing at once the genus to which it belongs, and the peculiarity which distinguishes it from the other species of that genus. These names, too, will be expressed, not in the barbarous dialect of the rude Indian tribes within whose limits the species were found, nor in the Portuguese of their Christian masters, nor in the native French of the great explorer of the valley of the Amazon, nor yet in the English of the country which sent forth the expedition, but in the languages which are common to science in all lands, and which must endure unchanged through all the remaining ages of history—names vivid in their descriptive picturing, brief for familiar use, equally intelligible in every school of science in the world, and pronouncable by every tongue throughout the area of civilization.

Now it is obvious that if all scientific names are in Latin and Greek, any person who is to become acquainted with science should possess some knowledge of those languages. It may not be an

intimate and familiar acquaintance, and may not embrace an exact and precise knowledge of the refinements of speech; but some knowledge of the vocabulary, particularly of the Latin, is clearly indispensable to a student of science. Without it he cannot know the meaning of the names he is daily uttering, and cannot write them with any certainty that he is accurate; while if he becomes himself a discoverer of species he is unable to describe them by any suitable names, and must see the honor of naming his own discoveries snatched from him by another. *If he becomes eminent enough to attempt to give instruction by lectures, he must continually present himself before his audience in the pitiable position of one who knows not the origin, or the explanation, of the names he is uttering; and who fears to commit a blunder in pronunciation as often as he opens his lips. A most eminent geologist of our own State, who has immortalized himself by bringing to light the thousands of fossils of the Silurian deposits of New York, experienced the disadvantage of this want of early preparation; and was obliged to supply the deficiency by learning the elements of Latin and Greek in the maturer years, and amid the active investigations of later life, in order to give names to the discoveries which he had made.

Nor is it only the nomenclature of its classification, which these languages contribute to science. As investigation advances, facts of a deeper kind come to view. Extended analogies begin to be observed, for which the common speech has no name; important generalizations are formed which call for accurate expression; and this expression again needs to be made the common possession of the scientific men who have to make use of it. It has been ascertained by Owen, for instance, that the fundamental type of construction for the whole great group of vertebrate animals, is *the vertebra*; and a scientific description of this important element becomes essential. It is given by the philosophic and learned discoverer in the following words:

“It consists in its typical completeness of the following parts or elements: a body, or *centrum*; two *neurapophyses*, two *parapophyses*, two *pleurapophyses*, two *hæmapophyses*, a *neural* spine, and a *hæmal* spine. These being usually developed from distinct and independent centres, I have termed *autogenous* elements. Other parts more properly called ‘processes’ which shoot out as continuations from some of the preceding elements are termed

exogenous; e. g., the *diapophyses* or 'upper transverse processes,' and the *zygapophyses* or the 'oblique' or 'articular' processes of human anatomy." (Lectures on Comparative Anatomy, Part I, page 43.)

It is obvious that the scientific style of our language must, with the progress of philosophical views of nature, go more and more to this abstruse and recondite habit of expression. The tendency is strikingly exhibited in the writings of the author just quoted; who affords certainly the most extraordinary example in our language, and perhaps in any other, of the union of precision with comprehensiveness and breadth. Many sentences might be quoted from his writings, remarkable for concise and lucid accuracy of statement, which yet, from their free use of those Greek compounds which enable the writer to compress into a perfectly definite word a whole comprehensive generalization, are almost unintelligible to the mere general reader.

Indeed, it is curious to imagine what would have been the position of the scientific world at the present day, without those cultivated languages of antiquity to afford the means for the expression of its thought, and for the perfection of its systematic nomenclature. One is positively frightened to think where we should have been by this time, if, by the want of any more generally current medium one hundred and fifty years ago, Linnæus had been compelled to name his wide and comprehensive enumeration of species in every department of nature, in his vernacular Swedish; Buffon, half a century later, to designate his vast array of added species, in his native French; the great English and American explorers of Australia and the Pacific, to name their discoveries in our mother tongue; the more recent and learned naturalists of Germany, to describe the results of their profound researches in German gutturals; the Dutch investigators of Java and Borneo, to employ their familiar language of Holland, and the Russian student of nature to use his own tongue, so difficult to outsiders, to furnish names for the plants of Siberia and the Ural. In such a state of things, science would be only another Babel. We should see mankind toiling through generations to build the loftiest structure that human hands have ever reared, and perpetually baffled by its own inevitable reproduction of the original judgment—a confusion of tongues.

It is truly one of the marvels of Divine Providence—for we

may be sure it is no accident—that, amid the wide diversities of speech in modern christendom, these two noble languages of antiquity should have come down to us as the common heritage of the nations; if not to serve for the personal intercourse of scientific men, yet to supply to science the descriptive terms of its elegant nomenclature, to afford names for the designation of its innumerable species, to furnish the compound words which express its wide generalizations, and thus to form its very language through the ages of its future development.

For these reasons a certain knowledge of the classical languages has become in our day an indispensable element of scientific education for every student of Natural History. The observer who analyzes a flower from the woods, or who makes a collection of shells from the beach, or who raises butterflies or moths from the cocoon, must, if he or she is ever to gain real possession of any one of these departments, or give any scientific value to such researches, be imbued with some tincture of classical learning; while the student who would even follow, with any true intelligence, the progress of scientific discussion, will find his way painfully obstructed without some such attainment.

II. Another very important aspect of this subject is found in the peculiar philological position of the classical tongues.

1. Together with our own, and with most of the languages of modern Europe, they form the great group known as that of the Indo-European languages. The members of that family are connected by many points of identity, which demonstrate their common derivation from one original and central stock in the seat of the world's earliest civilization. Among all these languages the Latin stands forth conspicuous by the singular perfection of its grammatical structure. The system of inflections is, in it, carried out with a regularity and completeness unknown in any other member of the family, unless it be the ancient Sanscrit. It affords, therefore, the very best accessible model for the study of philology. Whoever would cultivate an acquaintance with the science of language in general, will find ampler material for his researches here, than perhaps in any other available form of human speech.

2. If this consideration should seem somewhat far-fetched in itself, it is by no means so in its immediate application.

The Latin language does not stand alone in the world, an isolated and disconnected fact. The old speech of Rome is the

basis of the languages of half the population of Europe; and those, with the single exception (besides our own) of the German, by far the most important. It is the basis of the French, so long the language of refinement and taste in books, and of the intercourse of all the courts and drawing-rooms, and all the polite society, of Europe. It is still more the foundation of the Italian, the earliest in culture and development of the modern tongues, and the language of music and the fine arts. It has given character to the Spanish and the Portuguese—the languages of those energetic nations which, when emancipated from those Bourbon dynasties that learn nothing and forget nothing, will yet vindicate their claim to be the children of those who first carried empire literally around the globe.

To all these tongues the Latin stands in the most intimate relation, and the mastery of it, is, in great part, the mastery of them. The student who is familiar with its grammatical forms, and its vocabulary, has learned so much of the structure of the others, that we may quote the high authority of Mr. John Stuart Mill, in his recent inaugural address, for the assertion that “the possession of it makes it easier to learn four or five of the continental languages than it would be to learn one of them without it.” Surely the language which affords the best key to general philology, and which renders most of the languages of modern Europe five fold easier of acquisition than they would otherwise be, has a claim to a prominent place in any general scheme of education.

3. Still further, the relation of the Latin tongue to our own, commends it as an object worthy of attention.

It is in great part the basis of our own familiar speech. Not, indeed, in the more simple and every day affairs of life is this the case, for in this department the Anglo-Saxon supplies those vivid, homely and significant forms of expression which give it so much of the beauty of simplicity, and of strength. But there is another side to our language, and this is almost wholly of Latin origin, which embraces all our language of philosophical discussion. All our metaphysics, and all our morals, are in expression essentially Greek or Roman. If we give utterance to our feelings as matters of personal experience, we pour forth our love or our hate, our envy or our fear, in the simple Saxon of our childhood; but the moment that we begin to moralize, or to philosophize—that is, to reflect, we speak of sensations, emotions, sentiments, passions,

impulses, and all these words are of Latin origin. The tendency to use these more abstract forms of statement has somewhat declined among us since the great authority of Dr. Johnson gave them such general currency in the last century; but no one can become familiar with Johnson's precise and weighty style of speech, without being sensible of its extraordinary force. It is not too much to say that his writings gave the British public a new view of the capabilities of their language; and that since his day it has been generally written with an exactness, a finish, and a power, of which there were very few previous examples in our literature. At present, this side of our English, though not unduly predominant, has a very wide acceptance among good writers; and even those who, like Paley for instance, possess a perfect mastery over all the simplicities of Saxon speech, feel themselves called, as he did, to a frequent use of very elaborate Latin constructions of phrase.

It is this union of widely different elements in the English tongue which forms one of its distinguishing excellencies; and no one can acquire the full command of the resources of our vernacular without a tolerable familiarity with this great source of its strength,—save, indeed, as some extraordinary ability may in rare instances supply the place of it.

To the same peculiarities of the Latin as a highly inflected language, is due that power of inversion of the parts of a sentence which forms so remarkable a feature of the style of the great writers of antiquity. As the form of each word indicated its place in the sentence, they were enabled to combine words with a freedom of which we have scarcely any other example. They studied the artistic construction of their sentences with the utmost care; and they carried this element of beauty and effect to a degree not attained in any other languages, and which has made their works the models for all subsequent ages. This freedom of adjustment none of our modern tongues has retained in any similar degree. The irregular and somewhat lawless style of the English has allowed us more of it than most others possess. We can place the predicate first, and invert the principal members of the sentence, whenever it becomes necessary for the expression of emotion. The French language, on the other hand, has, like the other subjects of the Emperor, entirely lost its liberty of utterance, and is confined to a single and invariable order, in which the subject is always placed first. The French critics seem rather to glory in

this peculiarity, as the proper character of a language of pure reason. "French Syntax is incorruptible," they say; no impulse of passion may disturb the orderly sequence of thought in that tongue. But so long as language shall have for its function the full expression of the human heart, so long will it be indispensable to find the means of adequately expressing emotion.

For this purpose the study of the classical authors is our great means of discipline. They present to us models of expression which are not to be found elsewhere. Indeed, the modern mind has passed the point at which it is possible for any similar models to be produced. It is rich with varied emotions, comprehensive of many forms of thought, and deep in the experience of sentiments, unknown to the ancients; and it has no time to elaborate those perfect forms of narration and statement which give such a charm to the more narrow and limited elegance of ancient days. But while the breadth of our thought, and the depth of our sentiment, so far surpass anything that the ancients knew, their graceful and beautiful forms of expression must long afford the most exquisite models by which to discipline the taste of our richer, stronger, and profounder age.

That these are not merely theoretical advantages may be inferred from the fact that a serious practical necessity of such linguistic culture is already beginning to be felt, even in quarters which it might be supposed would be entirely exempt from it. In the departments recently organized, for example, in some of our best colleges, for mechanical and scientific studies, there is found to exist among the students a great inaptitude, both for the acquisition of those modern languages by means of which such studies must be prosecuted, and for the ready and effective command of the English. So seriously have these difficulties been felt that the Scientific Faculty of one of the very highest of these institutions (I refer to the scientific school in Yale College), strongly recommends to all its pupils a preliminary discipline in Latin; and has even been forced to consider the propriety of making such a discipline an indispensable qualification for admission to the school.

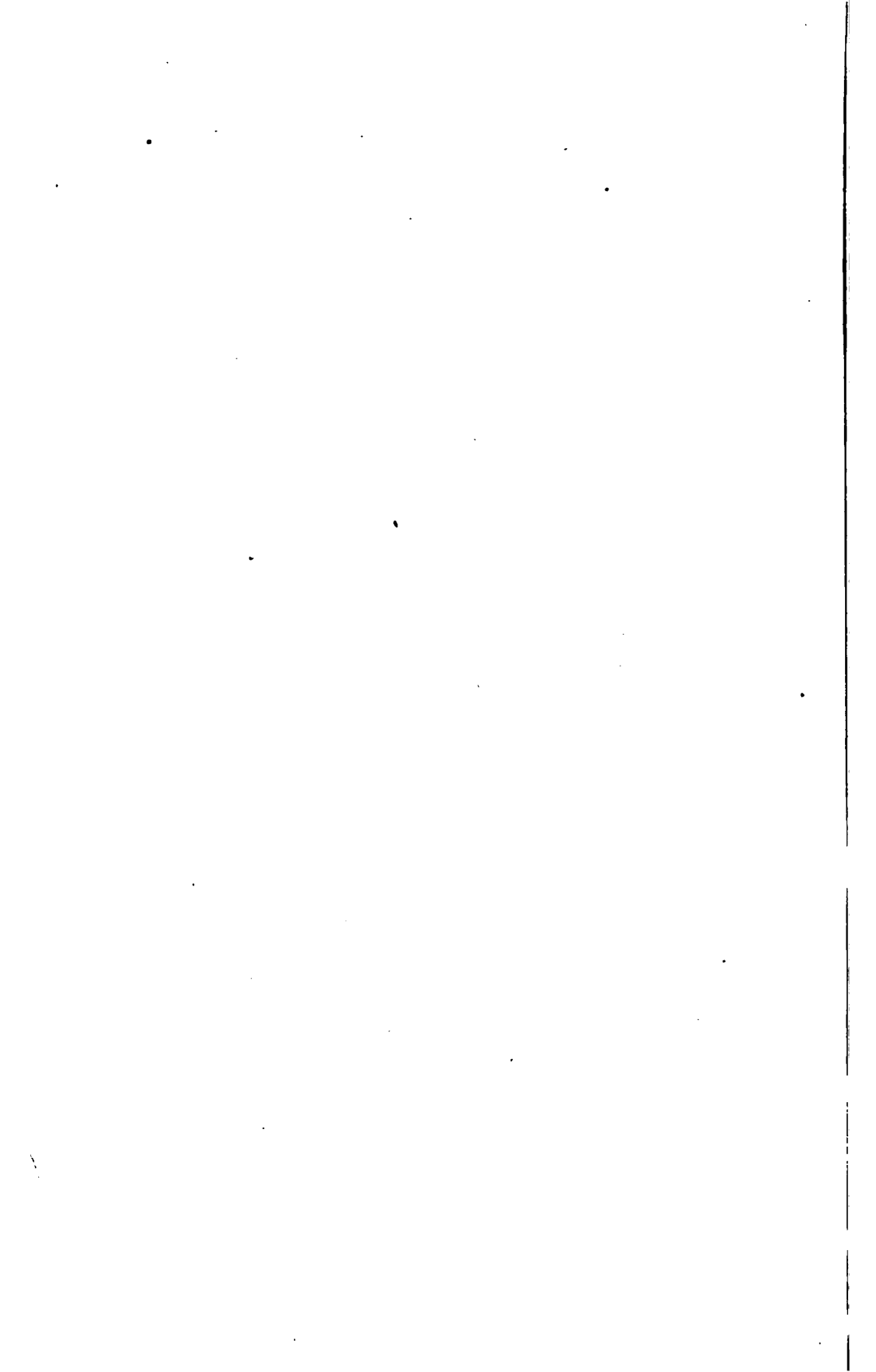
Nor are we at liberty in such a general summary to overlook the fact, that it is in one of these philosophical and elegant forms of human speech that the Almighty Father has been pleased to embody his highest and noblest communications to man. In it He has seen fit to record the history and the instructions of the world's great

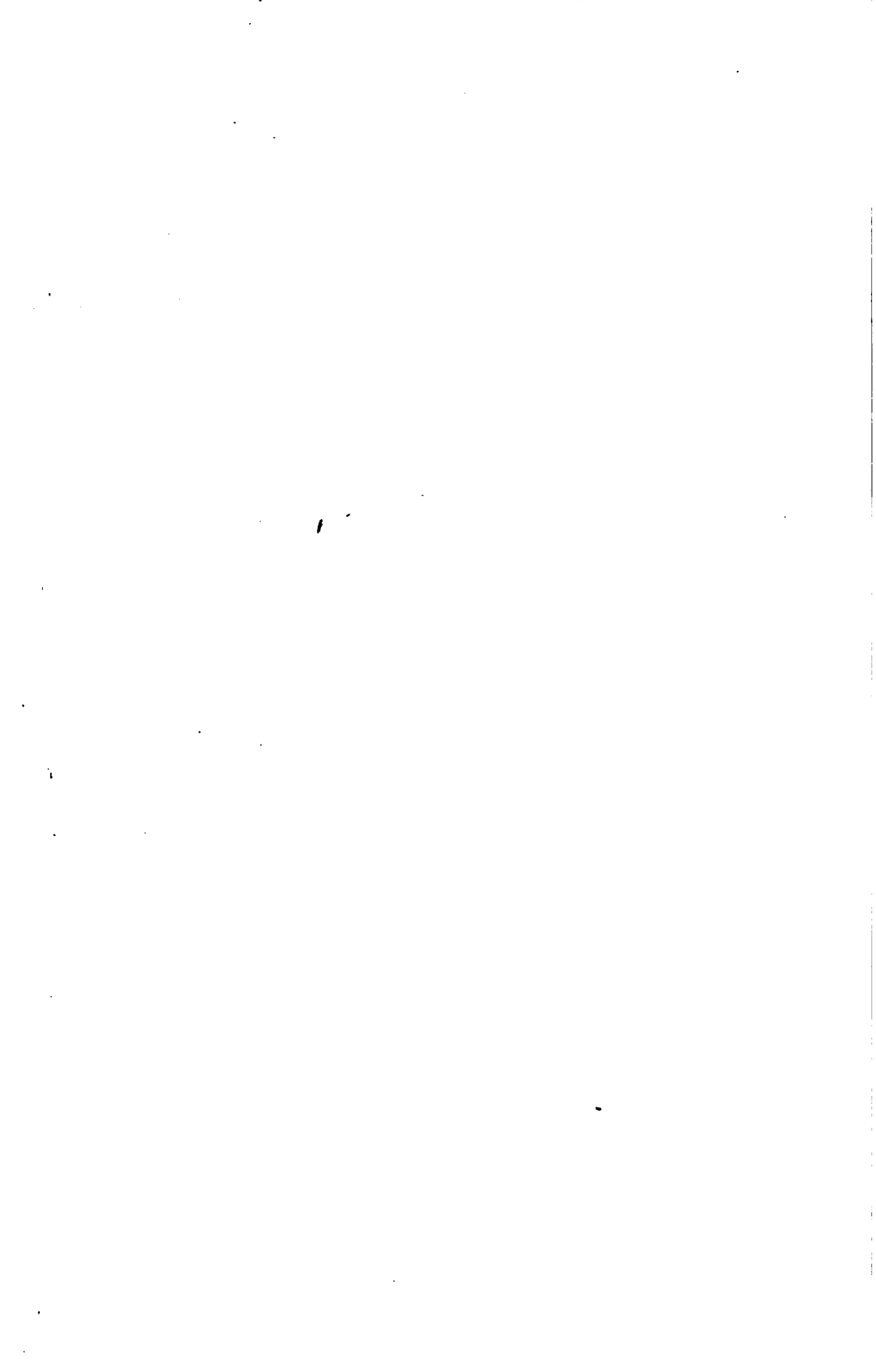
Teacher in the way of life,—the death which forms both the sublimest, and the most important event in the world's history, through all the past,—and the Resurrection, which both for each individual man, and for the race at large, most illumines and gilds the future.

Were it in some barbarous jargon that these grand disclosures had been embalmed—in some obscure and rude speech, the study of which could add nothing to our intellectual wealth, and contribute nothing to elegance and refinement—it would still seem both ungrateful and unhappy, perhaps also unwise and unsafe, to divorce our systems of education from the studies which contain the world's great means of moral culture. But how striking on the other hand is that providential design which has consigned the teachings of Christ to that language which, by the concession of all scholars, is certainly, the most philosophical, and perhaps also the most elegant, of all the forms of human speech! It seems as though He had designed that the reverent study of His great revelation should not only imbue the mind with religious knowledge, but impart to it also something of the best results of human culture and refinement. It is certainly not without design that the vehicle of the world's religion stands so closely related to its philosophy and its science. The education which teaches us God, teaches us also what is best and noblest in man; as the elevation which raises us nearest to Heaven, shows us most truly and largely the earth.

It would seem, then, that the classical languages must ever occupy an important place in every institution of enlarged education. They are indispensable to any scientific knowledge of nature; they afford our best preparation for the acquisition of the cultivated languages, and of general philology; they enter largely into the constitution of our mother tongue; they afford us by far the best models of style; they supply our language of taste and elegance on the one side, and of philosophy and morals on the other; and they embody the spiritual treasures of God's revelation to man. In various degrees they mingle themselves with all the recent culture, as they stand related to all the early history, of mankind. It will always be difficult, but it is at present quite impossible, to devise means which could at all supply their place in education.









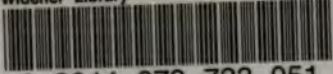
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